

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

19 NOVEMBER 2019

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

#### COMMUNITY LEARNING GRANT – EAST HUB

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with information regarding Welsh Government's (WG) Community Learning Grant and the East Hub project.

#### 2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority:
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 Following a full service restructure of Integrated Working and Family Support services in April 2015, three multi-disciplinary locality teams were created; moving from a stand-alone service model to an integrated Early Help Team structure, co-located with safeguarding teams. Each Early Help Locality Team was formed to include the following professional roles: family support workers, family engagement officers, parenting workers, Flying Start parenting workers, educational welfare officers, school-based counsellors and lead workers. This service has since developed and now includes police community support officers. In addition, the locality hub model was created to allow for close integrated working with professionals from other departments including locality Safeguarding Teams and Inclusion Service, Education Psychology Service staff and non-local authority professionals including health visitors and police liaison officers.
- 3.2 Accommodation was secured for the North Hub in Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen and for the West Hub in Pyle Life Centre. However, there was no budget available to allow for a bespoke multi-agency hub for the east locality and as an interim measure, space was secured in Civic Offices for eight desks adjacent to the Safeguarding East Team. Since 2015, the Early Help Team has expanded from 14 staff to 23, which has presented challenges for effective desk sharing and has led to more off-site working and homeworking which can have a detrimental effect on timely information sharing and joint working. The lack of working space has prevented other professionals, such as behaviour support, ancillary support and educational psychologists, becoming embedded within the service model in the east locality.

- 3.3 The current staffing levels for Safeguarding have also increased since the restructure and now stands at 24 members of staff. This presents similar challenges of office space and the ability to undertake effective joined-up working between Early Help and Safeguarding staff.
- 3.4 Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to identify children and families who would benefit from early help. Working together across the partnership will share intelligence and identify needs at the earliest opportunity, building confidence so practitioners identify needs as early as possible and take responsibility for getting them resolved. The proposed hub would ensure that services are locally accessible; working within the existing geographical location/structure to develop multi-agency and joint services, which are clear about what support is on offer and how it can be accessed. There is already existing partnerships with Flying Start, Families First and South Wales Police with their staff being based within the hubs and this approach can be further developed through ongoing collaboration with third sector partners. The service vision is to relocate health visitors within each of the locality hubs and this will further develop and strengthen the model.
- 3.5 Partner providers can reach out to those families and communities who are reluctant to engage to ensure that the needs of vulnerable children and young people are met through close working with the Early Help Hub, assisting with building relationships and trust with children and families to provide a range of services. The proposed hub will allow for effective engagement with community members and third sector agencies as Early Help services will consistently be delivered from one venue. Families that face multiple barriers to sustained engagement with services require services to be delivered from a single point in the community. Being based in a formal civic centre is a real barrier to this model of community-based, family-centred support as the office does not lend itself to informal access.

#### **4. Current situation**

- 4.1 In December 2018, WG invited local authorities across Wales to submit expressions of interest (EOI) against a £15m capital budget to create community learning hubs. The funding would be available in 2019-2020 with the funding to be used by 31 March 2020.
- 4.2 It was recognised that relocating the East Hub from Civic Offices to Brynteg School would significantly improve integrated working. An EOI was submitted for £1.044m of funding which was accepted by WG. In April 2019, a funding bid for the £1.044m received WG approval.
- 4.3 A scheme was developed in consultation with key stakeholders, and comprised of a new detached, single-storey building of approximately 313m<sup>2</sup>. A car park for use by the hub staff would be provided by utilising the current sixth-form car park, located adjacent to the proposed development site. Parking throughout the school site is being rationalised as part of an ongoing strategy to improve safeguarding. The scheme includes the demolition of an existing dilapidated temporary double mobile classroom, in order to create space for the new provision.

- 4.4 The tender was let by utilising the SEWSCAP 3 framework; the time allowed for the process ran concurrently with the planning process. Tenders were returned and assessed, however, they were significantly over the available construction budget. The scheme received planning approval on 24 October 2019.
- 4.5 The increased construction cost and a delay in the planning process has had a detrimental effect in achieving WG's required spend by 31 March 2020. WG was kept informed of this issue. Officers submitted a request for additional funding of £284,351 and also requested that monies are vired across financial years. This request received WG approval on 5 November 2019.
- 4.6 A pupil voice session has been held with Brynteg School Council. The School Council identified benefits to the school and community which included:
- access to service and improve wellbeing of pupils;
  - help to promote good attendance at the school;
  - improved facilities;
  - improved support for families;
  - co-location of staff will improve communication and relationships; and
  - more effective contact sessions.
- 4.7 Brynteg's School Council expressed concerns regarding parking and access to the school from Brynteg Gardens. The alternative arrangements were explained (ie access off Ewenny Road plus the construction of a new footpath to allow safe entry into the school from that location).
- 4.8 The Headteacher of Brynteg School has offered the project his full support.

## **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 An initial assessment has identified that there is no disproportionate impact on any protected group.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

- 7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment template has been completed and a summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is below:
- Long-term: The scheme has been identified through a collaborative strategic approach with officers from key departments of the Council including education, planning and corporate landlord plus headteacher representation. The group considered current and projected data including capacity and building condition.

- **Prevention:** The scheme has been identified to ensure that forms of working are geared towards reducing the number of children and young people open to statutory services. A more integrated, multi-agency, community-based service will better support this outcome.
- **Integration:** Construction has been competitively tendered, thereby achieving best value for money. Main contractors will be asked to advertise work on Sell to Wales which will potentially provide opportunities for local small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to tender for the construction, which would support economic activity in the area. Community benefits will be maximised.
- **Collaboration:** The local authority works effectively with schools, Estyn, Central South Consortium (CSC), health, community councils and many internal and external partners to ensure that the building meets the short-term and future needs of the users and the community which it will serve. Officers will work with technical colleagues developing the scheme to ensure that the building design is sustainable and energy efficient. In evaluating the list of options available, consideration will be given to how best make the schemes work effectively in order to maximise the use of resource and capitalise on the expenditure ensuring the schemes meet the needs of current and future generations.
- **Involvement:** Schemes are subject to a long list of options, which include site. These are systematically evaluated. Work involves the engagement of all potential stakeholders including Cabinet, members, governors, staff, pupils, community, internal and external partners which will include third sector organisations.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 WG funding approval has been received for the total project costs (ie £1,328,351).
- 8.2 The operational model for the East Hub and the links with Brynteg School have been considered throughout the project. Governors have been given assurance that the East Hub will be a cost neutral project for the school and a service level agreement will be developed regarding the responsibilities of the East Hub/school going forward in relation to the new building.
- 8.3 Revenue funding to support the proposal in the long term has been agreed. The ongoing revenue commitment of £20k per annum will be 50/50 jointly funded by the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and the Education and Family Support Directorate.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- note the contents of this report; and
  - approve the development of the East Hub on the site of Brynteg School as indicated in this report.

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### **Background documents**

- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Wellbeing and Future Generations Assessment